

January 14, 1958

to: BNA - Mr. Parsons  
From: BNA - W. N. Dale *WNA*  
Subject: History of U.K. Proposals on Neutral Zone in Europe

The first serious mention of a neutral zone in Europe was made by Eden in preparation for the Summit Meeting in July 1955.

1. Eden Proposal for Summit Meeting on July 18, 1955

Predicated upon the holding of German free elections, German unification, and German agreement, the so-called Eden Plan, actually circulated to us on July 12, 1955, included two major proposals:

a. Limitation of armed forces and armament "through agreement and by system of inspection and controls" (geographic limits left open).

b. Establishment of a "Demilitarized Zone" - "wherein no military forces would be allowed permanently or temporarily". The suggested Eastern boundary would follow the existing frontier between Eastern Germany and Poland to the Czech frontier; the Western boundary would follow the line Wismar/Riber Elbe/River Saale and then run parallel to the Czech frontier through Regensburg.

2. Gaitskell Elaborates Eden Proposal - January 1957

In the third of a series of lectures at Harvard on January 10, 1957, Gaitskell referred to the Eden proposal and indicated that its extension to include withdrawal of NATO troops from Germany might lead to a Russian withdrawal of troops from the Satellites.

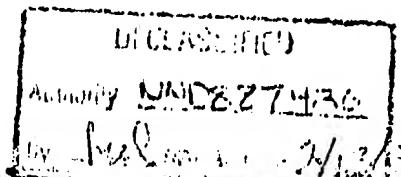
Possibly as trial balloons in anticipation of the U.K. annual Labour Conference in October, Gaitskell developed this thesis in speeches before the Tutch Labour Party Conference on March 8, 1957, at Berlin Free University on March 18, 1957, and at a Socialist meeting in Rome on April 24.

In talking with Embassy Officers, Gaitskell stated that this plan for German reunification and a neutral zone had originated with Dennis Healey (December 1956). Its points, in brief, are:

a. The gradual withdrawal of all foreign military forces from West and East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

b. The establishment of controls over the National Armed Forces in these countries, possibly within the framework of a comprehensive disarmament plan.

c. German



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c. German reunification on the basis of free elections.

d. A European security pact in which the territorial integrity of Neutral Zone states would be guaranteed by those states themselves and by the U.S., the U.S.S.R., U.K. and France (such a guarantee to be preceded by conclusion of a German-Polish border agreement).

e. If the U.S.S.R. insists, the withdrawal of Germany from NATO, but accompanied by the simultaneous withdrawal of Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia from the Warsaw Pact.

3. British TUC Approved Gaitskell's Neutral Belt Plan March 27, 1957

The TUC General Council in a meeting on March 27 passed a resolution based on the Gaitskell proposal but expanding the neutral belt to include Austria and Yugoslavia.

4. U.I. Labor Party Conference in October 1957, tacitly accepted the Gaitskell Plan which quite evidently has the blessing of the entire labor hierarchy including Bevan.

5. Dennis Healey pamphlet entitled, "A Neutral Belt in Europe", published in January 1958, takes up the Gaitskell thesis but points out that within the last twelve months, the Hungarian situation and the development of the Sputnik make it highly debatable as to whether the present situation can remain in status quo and makes it more important that a start be made in furtherance of the Gaitskell Plan.

Comment

In brief, U.S. objections to the Eden-Gaitskell proposals have been inter alia, that there can be no guarantee with regard to inspection and control; that it would be impossible to deploy NATO, U.S. and U.I. forces now in Germany elsewhere to equal effect; that a neutralized Germany would be indefensible; that the plan would abandon the NATO-Norstad "sheild" concept; that, even with withdrawal of Soviet troops from the satellites, the advantage would be to the U.S.S.R. in an offensive warfare; in point of fact, such a plan, if implemented might be a forerunner of withdrawal of U.S. forces from the continent of Europe.

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